

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FRB-03 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05
SS-15 STR-07 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 SP-02 SOE-02
OMB-01 DOE-15 /121 W
-----123930 250641Z /10

R 242041Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5716
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
USMISSION GENEVA

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USEEC

PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTRONICALLY
PARIS ALSO FOR USOECD
GENEVA ALSO FOR USMTN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, EEC
SUBJ: POSSIBLE ELIMINATION OF METHYL VIOLET AS COLOR
MARKING FOR CITRUS AND FRESH MEATS

1. COMMISSION OFFICIAL (D.G. III) DEALING WITH HARMONIZA-
TION OF MEMBER STATE LEGISLATION ON FOODSTUFFS TOLD US
THAT, BASED ON A PRELIMINARY REPORT JUST COMPLETED BY THE
SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE FOR FOOD, THE COMMISSION COULD
RECOMMEND THAT THE USE OF METHYL VIOLET FOR LABELING CER-
TAIN FOODSTUFFS BE DISCONTINUED. METHYL VIOLET IS
CURRENTLY USED ON SUCH FOODSTUFFS AS FRESH MEATS, CITRUS
AND CHEESES. OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE
SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE USE OF METHYL VIOLET
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COULD BE CHARACTERIZED AS QUOTE NOT FAVORABLE UNQUOTE.
HOWEVER, HE DID NOT ENUMERATE ON THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR
SUCH A FINDING. REPORT SHOULD BE MADE PUBLIC IN A COUPLE
OF WEEKS.

2. COMMISSION SOURCE SAID THAT IF A DECISION WERE TAKEN
TO PHASE OUT THE USE OF METHYL VIOLET, IT WAS NOT AS YET

CLEAR WHETHER A SEPARATE DIRECTIVE ON COLORING MATTERS WOULD BE INITIATED OR WHETHER THE COMMISSION WOULD RECOMMEND, ON THE BASIS OF THE REPORT, THAT MEMBER STATES TAKE APPROPRIATE INDIVIDUAL ACTION. HE SAID THAT ONE IDEA THAT HAS SURFACED IS THAT THE COMMISSION COULD SIMPLY PROPOSE THAT THE CURRENT DIRECTIVE ON COLORING MATTERS AUTHORIZED FOR USE IN FOODSTUFFS BE AMENDED TO ENCOMPASS COLORING MATTERS USED FOR THE MARKING OF FOOD PRODUCTS. THIS DIRECTIVE DOES NOT CURRENTLY GOVERN THE USE OF COLORING MATTER AUTHORIZED FOR STAMPING MEAT, CITRUS FRUIT, CHEESE RINDS, THE SHELLS OF EGGS AND OTHER EXTERNAL PARTS NOT USUALLY CONSUMED WITH THE FOODSTUFFS. IF COLORS USED FOR STAMPING FOODSTUFFS WERE BROUGHT INTO THE DIRECTIVE ON FOOD COLORINGS, METHYL VIOLET WOULD AUTOMATICALLY BE EXCLUDED AS IT DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE LIST OF COLORING MATTERS AUTHORIZED FOR USE IN THE COMMUNITY. OFFICIAL EMPHASIZED THAT IF THE COMMISSION DID MOVE IN THE DIRECTION OF LIMITING OR BANNING THE USE OF METHYL VIOLET FOR LABELING, THE PROCESS WOULD BE COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT METHYL VIOLET IS CURRENTLY THE ONLY AUTHORIZED COMMUNITY COLORING MATTER FOR STAMPING FRESH MEAT WITH INK.

3. COMMUNITY LEGISLATION DEALING WITH THE MARKING OF MEAT IS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE. ACCORDING TO THE COMMISSION OFFICIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEWING THE USE OF MARKINGS FOR MEAT IN D.G. VI, THE STANDING VETERINARY COMMITTEE HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE QUESTION OF ALTERNATIVES TO THE USE OF METHYL VIOLET FOR SOME TIME; HOWEVER, THERE HAS AS YET BEEN NO URGENCY TO THE ISSUE. HE SAID THAT HE HAD JUST TAKEN OVER RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS AREA AND WOULD NEED SOME TIME TO REVIEW THE SITUATION BEFORE HE COULD MAKE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE DID APPEAR TO BE A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES IF THE COMMUNITY CHOSE TO REPLACE THE USE OF METHYL VIOLET FOR MARKING MEAT.

4. WHILE ALTERNATIVES MAY EXIST FOR THE MEAT INDUSTRY, CITRUS INDUSTRY SOURCES INDICATE THAT THERE IS CURRENTLY NO GOOD ALTERNATIVE TO METHYL VIOLET FOR THE SURFACE LABELING OF CITRUS FRUIT. A RAPID PHASE OUT OF METHYL VIOLET FOR USE IN LABELING CITRUS WOULD REPORTEDLY POSE A PROBLEM.

5. THE MISSION WILL HAVE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN THE COMMISSION POSITION IS MORE CLEARLY KNOWN. MORRIS

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Message Attributes

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